IHS·EHR Walk Through

Welcome

The following pages will step you through various features of the IHS Electronic Health Record. Each page shows a screen shot of a different EHR component, with accompanying text description of the component. EHR continues to evolve as we learn new ways to improve its performance and usability, so these components may look different by the time EHR is installed at your facility.

THE MISSION

The Mission of the Indian Health Service is to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level. We are pleased to be able to introduce the latest tool in support of that mission – the IHS Electronic Health Record.

EHR and RPMS

The IHS Electronic Health Record provides a new graphical user interface that makes it easier than ever before to locate or create clinical information in the Resource and Patient Management System, or RPMS, database. The RPMS system consists of over 60 clinical and administrative applications that support patient care, operational and clinical data collection, and revenue generation. The EHR graphical presentation layer overlies the RPMS database and exchanges electronic information with it. EHR makes RPMS even more accessible, acceptable, and usable for clinicians, nurses, and other staff.

MAINTAINING THE PAST AS WE MOVE INTO THE FUTURE

EHR brings modern computing technology into health care documentation, but maintains the integrity of the RPMS system and all the data that has been collected over the years. Paper gives way to computers, but important health information is preserved.

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Notifications

One of the most powerful features of EHR is the ability to customize almost every aspect of the application according to the preference of the individual user. This provider has chosen for EHR to take her to the Notifications page whenever the application is launched. This page shows the provider all new laboratory results, flagging them as normal, abnormal, or critical. It also shows any unsigned orders, notes, or other items that require the attention of the provider. From this page the provider can elect to sign orders and notes, remove items that have been viewed, or defer action until later.

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Cover Sheet

Once a patient is selected, the provider can obtain an overview of the patient through the Cover Sheet. Again, the appearance and content of this page can be customized to suit the needs of the provider. Typical contents of a cover sheet might include the Problem List, Allergies, Medication list, lab results, and immunizations, among others. The cover sheet is a quick way for the provider to familiarize herself with the patient when beginning an encounter.

Review Problem List, Purpose of Visit

For over 30 years, the Problem List has been the provider's tool for keeping track of important health conditions, but maintaining an accurate and complete Problem List has always been difficult. EHR gives providers an easy way to add problems, modify them, add notes, or delete problems that are no longer present. Problems can be designated as active, inactive, or part of the family history, and ICD codes can be selected either directly by the provider or subsequently by certified coders.

This page also allows the provider to build the Purpose of Visit, or POV, for the current encounter. This is done either by selecting diagnoses from the Problem List, from any of a number of POV pick lists, or by entering a new POV. POV pick lists can be patient-specific, clinic-specific, or provider-specific, which makes it easy for a provider to find a POV for which an appropriate code has already been selected. Addition of a new POV is also easy, and again allows the provider to select an ICD code, and to enter important information about injury diagnoses.

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Review Medications

EHR links to the powerful RPMS Pharmacy application to display for the provider a listing of current and past medications. This page allows the provider to visually review the drug regimen with the patient. Medications can also be refilled, renewed, or discontinued from the Medications page.

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Review Labs
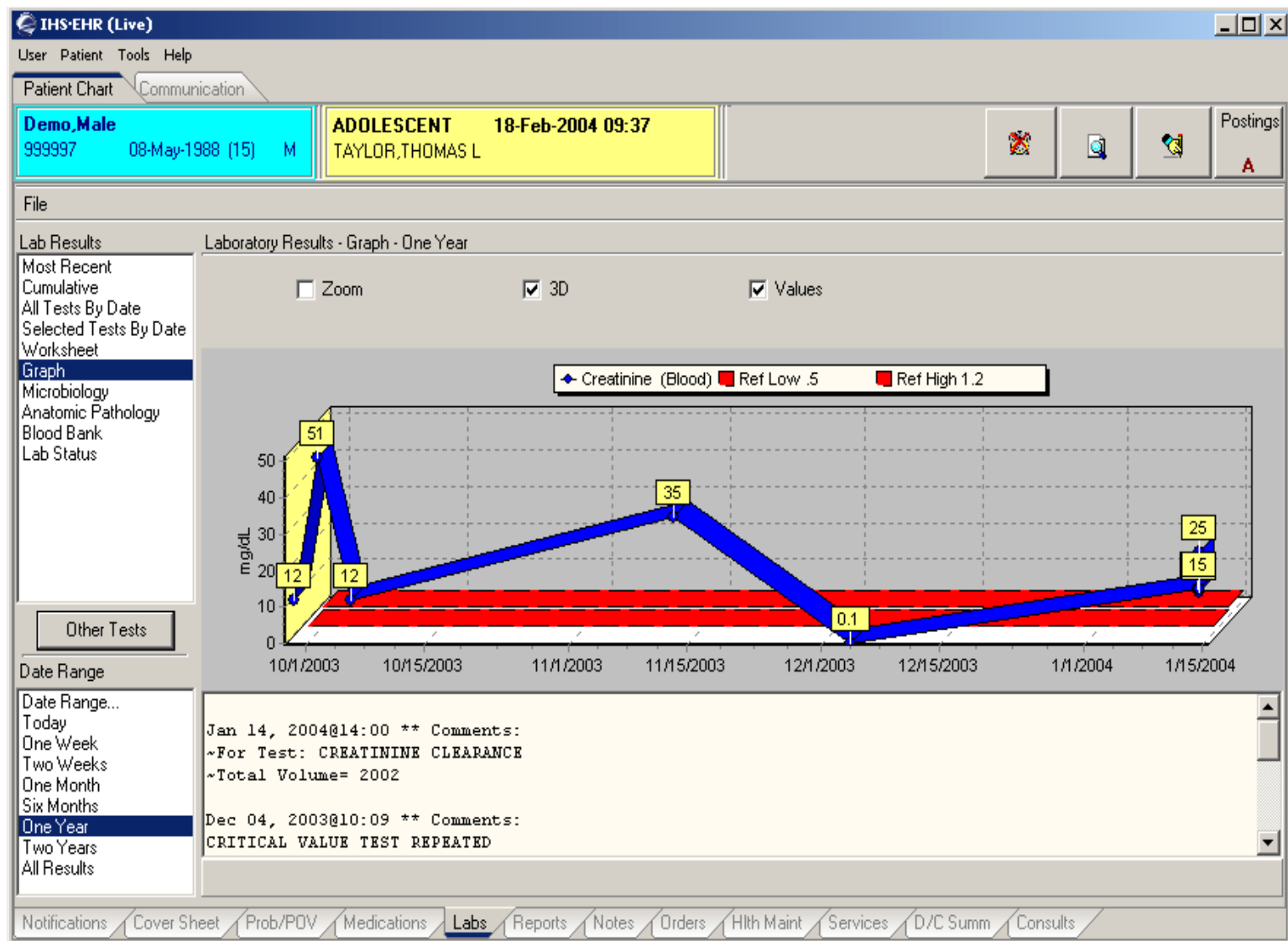
When the provider wants to review past laboratory results or share them with the patient, the Laboratory page provides several options. Lab results can be viewed or grouped in a number of different ways. An important educational tool is the ability to show lab results as a graph, in order to demonstrate trends over time. A patient who sees how his lab results have improved with treatment is more likely to continue to comply with the provider's recommendations.

A number of reports, such as radiological interpretations or consultations, may be located in the Reports section. There is no limit to the type, variety, or number of report categories that may be created in EHR.

Review Notes

One of the main reasons to have an electronic record is that all clinical encounters, including office visits, telephone calls, pharmacy consultations, public health visits, and so forth, can be documented thoroughly and legibly, and are immediately available to all authorized users. The provider can review notes from the last clinic visit, or from the dietician who saw the patient just minutes before.

Create a Note

EHR uses an application called the Text Integration Utility, or TIU, to create and store clinical encounter notes in RPMS. TIU uses customized templates to guide documentation of different types of visits. An unlimited variety of templates may be created, and they can be shared among users or among facilities. Templates can be set up to pull data from RPMS to automatically bring things such as vital signs, problem lists, or medications into a note. Templates can include objects like checkboxes or multiple-choice lists, and by using the mouse or pointer to select template objects, the provider can build a narrative encounter note. Free text entry of information not suitable for templates can also be done.

Enter Orders

Evidence from the medical literature shows that direct provider entry of orders into the computer improves patient safety, because the risk of misinterpreting illegible orders is no longer present. The orders page provides a single location from which the provider may enter medication, laboratory, and radiology orders, and eventually others such as nursing and dietary orders.

EHR provides improved ways to enter information such as health factors and patient education. The education codes, for example, correspond to those provided by the IHS National Patient Education Program, and selecting these codes populates the appropriate fields in RPMS for documentation and billing purposes. EHR also provides a link to the RPMS Immunization package.

Most IHS and Tribal facilities have a need to bill Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance companies in order to recover some of the costs of providing care, and to support important programs and staff. Using the fully customizable superbills available in EHR, all billable services can be documented. An unlimited variety of superbills may be created, and these can be customized for each provider, for each clinic, for nurses, or in any other way. Similarly, the provider can select an Evaluation and Management Code that is appropriate for the level of service provided. Information from this page is sent directly to RPMS, where it is immediately available to the billing application.